

Remarks:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-26 remain in the application. Claims 1-4 and 16-26 have been amended.

In the section entitled "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112" on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, claims 18-25 have been rejected as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

More specifically, the Examiner has stated that claims 18-25 are improper because they mix two classes of invention in one claim. Appropriate correction has been made.

It is accordingly believed that the claims meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Should the Examiner find any further objectionable items, counsel would appreciate a telephone call during which the matter may be resolved. The above-noted changes to the claims are provided solely for cosmetic and/or clarificatory reasons. The changes are neither provided for overcoming the prior art nor do they narrow the scope of the claims for any reason related to the statutory requirements for a patent.

In the section entitled "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102" on pages 2-3 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1-6, 12, 16 and 26 have been rejected as being anticipated by Göttling (US Pat. No. 6,006,666) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

The rejection has been noted and claims 1-4, 16 and 26 have been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. Although the exact word "non-abrasive" is not mentioned in the specification, support for the changes can be derived from the description of the embodiments of the invention of the instant application as a chemical clearing process (see, for example, page 13, line 16 of the specification).

Göttling teaches a method and apparatus for erasing the ink-carrying layer from the surface of an image-containing printing form. As can be seen in Figs. 1 and 2 of Göttling, a nozzle 6 directs a jet of water to the surface of a printing plate 1 so that image elements 4, which are located on the top of the surface of the printing plate 1, are removed in an abrasive manner (see, for example, column 2, line 35 or column 4, line 17).

In contrast, the core concept of the invention of the instant application is to change the properties of the printing plate from an ink accepting state (hydrophobic state) to a water

accepting state (hydrophilic state) not in an abrasive manner, but by use of a clearing medium and a chemical reaction of the clearing medium and the surface of the printing plate.

Clearly, Göttling does not show a method or a device in which the printing form is treated or cleared with a fluid clearing medium in a non-abrasive manner, as recited in claims 1-4, 16 and 26 of the instant application.

Claims 1-4, 16 and 26 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over Göttling and since claims 5-6 and 12 are dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In the section entitled "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103" on page 3 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 7-11, 13-15 and 17-25 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Göttling under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

As discussed above, claims 1 and 16 is believed to be patentable over the art. Since claims 8-11, 13-15 and 18-25 are ultimately dependent on claims 1 or 16, they are believed to be patentable as well.

Claim 17 has been amended in the same manner as claims 1-4, 16 and 26 and is believed to be patentable over Göttling for the same reasons as discussed above.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-26 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

  
For Applicants

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Marked-Up Version of the Amended Claims:

Claim 1(amended). A method for clearing a re-imageable printing form, which comprises treating the printing form with a fluid clearing medium in a non-abrasive manner.

Claim 2(amended). A method for clearing a re-imageable, printing form, which comprises cleaning the printing form of ink, and treating the cleaned printing form with a fluid clearing medium in a non-abrasive manner.

Claim 3(amended). A method for clearing a re-imageable printing form, which comprises treating the printing form with a liquid clearing medium in a non-abrasive manner.

Claim 4(amended). A method for clearing a re-imageable printing form, which comprises treating the printing form with a gaseous clearing medium in a non-abrasive manner.

Claim 16(amended). A device for clearing a re-imageable printing form, comprising a device for applying fluid clearing medium to the printing form in a non-abrasive manner.

Claim 17(amended). A device for clearing a re-imageable printing form washed free of ink, comprising a device for

applying fluid clearing medium to the ink-free printing form  
in a non-abrasive manner.

Claim 18(amended). The device for clearing a re-imageable printing form according to claim [13] 16, wherein said device for applying fluid clearing medium serves for applying liquid clearing medium to the printing form.

Claim 19(amended). The device for clearing a re-imageable printing form, according to claim [13] 16, wherein said device for applying fluid clearing medium serves for applying gaseous clearing medium to the printing form.

Claim 20(amended). The device for clearing a printing form according to claim [13] 16, including an ultrasound source for irradiating the printing form with ultrasound.

Claim 21(amended). The device for clearing a printing form according to claim [13] 16, including a heat source for heating the printing form.

Claim 22(amended). The device for clearing a printing form according to claim [18] 21, wherein said heat source is at least one of an infra-red laser, at least one heat emitter, and at least one hot-air blower.

Claim 23(amended). The device for clearing a printing form according to claim [18] 21, including a device for generating higher than normal atmospheric pressure in the environment of the printing form.

Claim 24(amended). The device for clearing a printing form according to claim [13] 16, wherein said device for applying fluid clearing medium to the printing form is a sprayer.

Claim 25(amended). The device for clearing a printing form according to claim [13] 16, including a device for partitioning the printing form against effects of light.

Claim 26(amended). A printing machine having a device for clearing a re-imageable printing form, comprising a device for applying fluid clearing medium to the printing form in a non-abrasive manner.